



LIBRARY OF HEAVEN'S PATH

C1326 - Classifications of Quintessence (1)



Chapter 1326: Classifications of Quintessence (1)

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“Pardon me, it seems like I have acted inappropriately...” With a smile, Jian Qinsheng swiftly regained his composure as he looked at Zhang Xuan with a satisfied look. “The swordsmanship you executed previously is also the Flowing Water Swordsmanship, right?”

Hearing that name, Zhang Xuan was startled. He shook his head and replied, “Flowing Water Swordsmanship? What’s that?”

"You have never heard of it before?" Jian Qinsheng frowned. "The swordsmanship that you practice was created by my ancestor, the Third Sanctum Head, Jian Liushui, and it has been passed down for many generations before coming down to me. It is also practiced by many other sword practitioners in the Sanctum of Sages. The swordsmanship that you executed earlier, be it in terms of Sword Intent or maneuvers, bears a close resemblance to it. It should be the Flowing Water Swordsmanship."

Even though the swordsmanship was created by his ancestor, it was not just passed down through his lineage. There were many students of the Sanctum of Sages' Sword Sanctuary who practiced the Flowing Water Swordsmanship as well.

He thought that even if the young man before him was not from the Zhang Clan, he must have grasped the crux to the Flowing Water Swordsmanship through some kind of fortuitous encounter, allowing him to achieve such strength within a short period of time.

Yet, to think that the young man had not even heard of the Flowing Water Swordsmanship before!

Realizing that Jian Qinsheng might be referring to that terribly flawed swordsmanship of his, Zhang Xuan replied with a polite smile, "To tell you the truth, the sword art that I executed earlier was something that I came up with. Even though it's similar to your Flowing Water Swordsmanship in form, they are two different sword arts!"

That nonsensical swordsmanship might have appeared fine at first glance, but upon further examination, the flaws that it was riddled with would leave one feeling disgusted all over. He would have to be mad to practice such swordsmanship!

"You came up with that sword art?" Jian Qinsheng widened his eyes in disbelief.

On the other hand, Zhang Xuan nodded in response.

Considering that he was in the Sanctum of Sages, one of the top institutes in the Master Teacher Continent, he could not afford to use Yang Xuan's name anymore. Otherwise, if the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters looked into the matter and proved his statement false, he would be in deep trouble. Since that was the case, it would be safer for him to say that he was the one who had come up with it.

In any case, after comprehending Sword Quintessence, he could already be considered a swordmaster. As such, it would not be unusual for him to have come up with a couple of sword arts or something.

"This..." Jian Qinsheng was still unable to believe what he had just heard. "Can you display the sword art that you have created once more?"

"Of course!" Zhang Xuan nodded in response.

With a flick of his fingers, several cold glints shot forth from his fingertips, slicing right through the air.

His movements were straightforward and to the point, devoid of any complexity. However, they carried an inescapable sharp edge, as if one would be unable to escape from him once the sword qi had laid its eyes on them.

Another thing to note was that the sword art executed was extremely slow, but it carried a devastating momentum that left others feeling deeply helpless.

It was as if standing against the sword art was equivalent to standing against the very heavens.

"It really isn't the Flowing Water Swordsmanship..." Jian Qinsheng muttered in disappointment.

He had thought that the young man before him had managed to grasp the crux of his ancestor's swordsmanship, but from the looks of it, the conceptualization of the two sword arts were vastly different. This was a clear sign that they were from two separate lineages.

Furthermore, he could tell that the other party's sword art was even more profound than his ancestor's Flowing Water Swordsmanship, containing innumerable transformations.

Unfortunately, it was still severely lacking in terms of prowess. From the looks of it, it was likely to be a rather low tier sword art, not exceeding Saint intermediate-tier.

Tossing aside the feelings of disappointment within, Jian Qinsheng looked at the young man before him once more. "Since Zhang Shi was able to create such a formidable sword art, and your comprehension of swordsmanship has also achieved the level of Sword Quintessence, you probably aren't here to learn."

Considering how accomplished the young man before him was in the field of swordsmanship, possibly achieving a level that was close to him, it was unlikely that the young man was there to learn from him.

"I did come to visit with a humble request in mind. I heard that Elder Jian has a vast collection of sword art manuals, and if it's not too much to ask, I would like to browse through it." Zhang Xuan revealed his true intentions.

"You wish to browse through my collection of sword art manuals? That isn't a problem, just that..." At this point, Jian Qinsheng hesitated for a brief moment before continuing. "To tell you the truth, my Compendium of Sword Arts was created by my ancestor, Jian Liushui, and he has infused his Sword Intent into it. Only those who have acquired the recognition of his Sword Intent will be able to enter its premises. In fact, I use that as a basis for deciding whom to accept as my disciples so as to ensure that they will be able to enter and study in the Compendium of Sword Arts."

“Only those who have acquired the recognition of his Sword Intent will be able to enter its premises?” Zhang Xuan frowned.

He had heard of this matter from Shui Qianrou prior to heading over, and back then, he had thought that it was a rule that Jian Qinsheng had come up with. But from the looks of it now, that was not the case.

“That’s right. My ancestor reached the very pinnacle of the Master Teacher Continent in his time, and his strength far surpassing mine. The Sword Intent that he left behind is exceptionally powerful, such that even I am unable to flout his rules,” Jian Qinsheng said with a bitter smile.

Everyone said that he was too rigid and inflexible. He possessed an exceptional sword heritage, but he chose to selfishly keep it to himself, and that was what that led to him being unable to find a suitable successor to his lineage of swordsmanship.

Only he himself knew that he was restricted by the rules imposed by his ancestor, and there was nothing he could do about it.

“There are only two possible ways one can enter the Compendium of Sword Arts. First, possessing the Sanctum Head Token. Second, earning the acknowledgement of the Sword Intent. There are no other alternatives. If you really wish to access the book collection, feel free to give it a go. Once you have earned the acknowledgement of the Sword Intent, you will be able to freely enter and leave the Compendium of Sword Arts.”

Zhang Xuan pondered for a moment before nodding. “Alright.”

While he possessed the Sanctum Head Token, he still was not entitled to the privileges that it came with. His cultivation realm was only at Leaving Aperture realm primary stage, and his master teacher rank was at 7-star; he was a long way off being able to unseal the token.

Putting aside the fact that Sage Kui had warned him against revealing the Sanctum Head Token to anyone before he managed to successfully unseal it, it could lead to a great deal of trouble if he did so.

This simply was not aligned with his motto of humility and keeping a low profile.

Since that was the case, it would be good for him to see if he could receive the acknowledgement of the Sword Intent first. Perhaps, he might just be able to clear it easily with the unique nature of the Heaven’s Path Sword Art.

“Follow me!” Jian Qinsheng nodded before beckoning Zhang Xuan over.

Considering how talented the young man before him was and, most importantly of all, he was not from the Zhang Clan, Jian Qinsheng was more than willing to grant him access to his collection of books. However, it was a pity that he was helpless before the rules.

Zhang Xuan followed closely behind Jian Qinsheng, and Shui Qianrou, Senior Xie, and the others glanced at one another before deciding to tag along.

The fact that they were all present meant that they had earned the acknowledgement of the Sword Intent. They were curious to see if this young swordmaster would be able to do the same.

It did not take long for them to arrive at a rather spacious room. Inscribed at the very center of the room was a wall with a massive ‘剑 (Sword)’ character. Its strokes were sharp and powerful, carrying a disposition that felt as if it would pierce through the heavens.

It was somewhat similar to the character that he had seen back at the Sword Lagoon, but the both of them were completely different in terms of conceptualization.

Carved beneath the ‘剑’ character were all kinds of explanations and interpretations. With just a glance, it was apparent that there was some history to those carvings. Most likely, they were the insights and experiences left behind by generations of sword practitioners in the lineage.

“This character was left behind by Ancestor Liushui many years ago,” Jian Qinsheng explained. “As long as one can step within five meters of it without coming under its attack, one will have earned the Sword Intent’s acknowledgement.”

“I see.” Zhang Xuan nodded.

Once a sword practitioner had tempered their Sword Intent to a profound level, the Sword Intent could gain a certain level of consciousness, allowing it to assess a situation instinctively and move of its own accord to protect its owner. The character inscribed on the wall harnessed Jian Liushui's very will, and it would be a grave mistake to underestimate the prowess of the Sword Intent harnessed within it. If it sensed a conceptualization of swordsmanship that was at odds with it, it would automatically launch a series of attacks.

"Allow me to give it a try." Knowing what it would take for him to access the collection of books, Zhang Xuan took in a deep breath and began walking forward slowly.

However, barely after taking a single step, he was already feeling immensely pressured by the massive character before him. It felt as if he was a mortal standing before a stupendously massive sun, and every step forward resulted in a swift intensifying of the searing sensation on his Primordial Spirit.

Is the swordsmanship I have cultivated really incompatible with the Sword Intent?

Zhang Xuan had been hoping that the odds would be in his favor, but given the current circumstances, it was clear that he was not going to receive the acknowledgement of the Sword Intent.

This was really troublesome.

He could attempt to sneak into the Compendium of Sword Arts to read the books, but considering that he was in the Sanctum of Sages, perhaps that might not be a good decision.

Ignoring the tight defenses around the Compendium of Sword Arts, if it was revealed that he, the future sanctum head, had broken into his own academy like a thief, he would become the laughingstock of the town!

Jeez, with great power comes great responsibility!

It seemed like becoming the sanctum head was not necessarily a blessing.

He really missed those days when he was a nobody and could do whatever he wanted freely without being restrained by anything!

While Zhang Xuan was thinking such thoughts, his feet did not stop. He continued advancing forward, and the pressure from the character continued heaping down on him. It was as if he was standing right beneath a guillotine, and the blade was about to fall upon his neck at any moment.

Feeling threatened by the might of the Sword Intent harnessed within the ‘劍’ character, the Sword Intent within Zhang Xuan’s body also began stirring in unease, eager to charge out to stand its ground against the other.

“Will he be able to obtain the acknowledgement of the Sword Intent?” Shui Qianrou asked worriedly as she watched the young man advancing toward the ‘劍’ character.

Jian Qinsheng shook his head. “I’m afraid that things don’t look too good for him...”

Through his observation, he could tell that the young man had already found his own path in swordsmanship, and it was of a vastly different conceptualization to his

ancestor's Flowing Water Swordsmanship. It was not possible for the young man to successfully obtain the Sword Intent's acknowledgement.

Wu wu wu!

While Jian Qinsheng was in the midst of his words, the '劍' character on the wall abruptly jolted, and a surge of sword qi shot straight for Zhang Xuan.

"Haa..." Knowing that this was a sign of failure, Jian Qinsheng sighed deeply as he waved his hand forward.

A powerful might burst forth from his finger, deflecting the sword qi emanated from the '劍' character.

"Come back!"

"Alright." Knowing that the result was already clear, Zhang Xuan could only shake his head in disappointment before retreating.

"It seems like you aren't able to win the acknowledgement of the Sword Intent. Perhaps, this is a sign to say that you aren't meant to enter the Compendium of Sword Arts," Jian Qinsheng said in lamentation.

Hearing those words, Zhang Xuan could only sigh deeply again.

Considering that the Heaven's Path Sword Art harnessed the very essence of swordsmanship, he had been hoping that it might just be able to earn the acknowledgement of the Flowing Water Swordsmanship. However, it seemed like his thoughts were too naive.

"May I know if there's any way for me to obtain the acknowledgement of the Sword Intent?"

"There's only one true peak to swordsmanship, but there are many different Sword Quintessences that pave the way to the top. The Sword Quintessence comprehended by my ancestor is one such way, and the one comprehended by the head of the Zhang Clan is another. Even though they lead to the same peak, different Sword Quintessences still

repel one another due to their fundamental differences. Thus, I fear that it's impossible for you to succeed in your current state.

"That being said, perhaps, just perhaps... if you could comprehend the Flowing Water Swordsmanship to the level of Sword Quintessence, you might just be able to earn the acknowledgement of the Sword Intent," Jian Qinsheng said.

If the comprehending of true swordsmanship was the destination that all sword practitioners hoped to reach, Sword Quintessences could be considered the pathway that sword practitioners tread upon on their way there. Naturally, even if there was only one destination, there were innumerable pathways that could lead one there.

This was just like how a question could be resolved in many different manners, but the answer would still be the same.

"What you mean is that... as long as I comprehend the Sword Intent harnessed in the '劍' (Sword) character on the wall and achieve the level of Sword Quintessence, I might be able to obtain the Sword Intent's acknowledgement?" Zhang Xuan asked.

“That’s right.” Jian Qinsheng nodded. “However, don’t even think about trying that. It’s only a possibility I am proposing theoretically. Achieving one Sword Quintessence already requires a sword practitioner to devote their entire life to it. Achieving a second one... that would be practically impossible! There have been countless swordsmanship geniuses in the Sanctum of Sages, but none of them have ever succeeded in that before. It will only be a waste of effort...”

“Is it really that difficult?” Zhang Xuan wondered doubtfully as he turned his gaze toward the words beneath the ‘剑 (Sword)’ character and closed his eyes.

“Indeed. The difficulty is so great that it’s almost unimaginable. From what I read in the records, my ancestor, Jian Liushui, attempted to comprehend another Sword Quintessence after completing the Flowing Water Swordsmanship, only to fail terribly, nearly causing his cultivation to go berserk...”

With a deep sigh, Jian Qinsheng turned his gaze to the young man to usher him out with an apology when a loud buzzing sound suddenly echoed.

A surge of Sword Intent burst forth from the young man’s glabella. Seemingly sensing something, the ‘剑 (Sword)’ character ahead suddenly began trembling excitedly, and even the room itself began creaking loudly.

Jian Qinsheng’s eyes widened in astonishment. “Is that... the Sword Quintessence of the Flowing Water Swordsmanship?”

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